

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
RAMONA COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP

A regular meeting of the Ramona Community Planning Group (RCPG) was held December 1, 2011, at 7 p.m., at the Ramona Community Library, 1275 Main Street, Ramona, California.

In Attendance:	Chad Anderson	Torry Brean (Arr 7:10)	Bob Hailey
	Carl Hickman	Eb Hogervorst	Kristi Mansolf
	Jim Piva	Paul Stykel (Arr 7:20)	Angus Tobiason
	Richard Tomlinson	Kevin Wallace	

Excused Absence: Matt Deskovick and Scotty Ensign

Jim Piva, RCPG Chair, acted as Chair of the meeting, Bob Hailey, RCPG Vice-Chair, acted as Vice-Chair of the meeting, and Kristi Mansolf, RCPG Secretary, acted as Secretary of the meeting.

ITEM 1: The Chair Called the Meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m.

ITEM 2: Pledge of Allegiance

ITEM 3: DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM (Mansolf)

The Secretary Determined a Quorum was Present.

ITEM 4: LIST OF ABSENTEES FOR THIS MEETING. Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences by the RCPG – Secretary Will Read Record Separately from the Minutes

Matt Deskovick and Scotty Ensign had excused absences

ITEM 5: ANNOUNCEMENTS & Correspondence Received (Chair)

The Chair announced that State Senator Joel Anderson was having a VIP reception on December 7 at 5 p.m.. A general reception would follow at 6 p.m. The RCPG is invited. The Chair asked anyone interested in going to let him know

Ms. Mansolf said the first RCPG meeting of 2012 will be on Thursday, January 5.

The Ramona Grasslands Preserve Project Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration came out November 17. The project proposes 8.6 miles of non-motorized multi-use trails, including 6.5 miles of existing trails and 2.1 miles of new trails within the 3,490 acre Ramona Grasslands Preserve. Comments must be received by December 16.

ITEM 6: FORMATION OF CONSENT CALENDAR – *No Items Brought Forward*

ITEM 7: APPROVAL OF ORDER OF THE AGENDA (Action)

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA.

Upon motion made by Bob Hailey and seconded by Eb Hogervorst, the motion **passed 11-0-0-4**, with Torry Brean, Matt Deskovick, Scotty Ensign and Paul Stykel absent.

ITEM 8: APPROVAL OF MINUTES 11-3-11 (Action)

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 3, 2011.

Upon motion made by Richard Tomlinson and seconded by Bob Hailey, the motion **passed 9-0-2-0-4**, with Chris Anderson and Dennis Sprong abstaining, and Torry Brean, Matt Deskovick, Scotty Ensign and Paul Stykel absent.

ITEM 9: NON-AGENDA ITEMS Presentations on Land Issues not on Current Agenda (No Presentations on Ongoing Projects – These Must be Agendized) – None

ITEM 10: Subcommittee Reports

10-A: SOUTH (Hailey) (Action Item)

10-A-1:P11-029, Major Use Permit for Wholesale Distributed Generation Solar Project at 1650 Warnock Dr. Photo Voltaic Solar Farm. Site is 110 Acres. Proposal is for 46.32 Acres to be Developed with Solar Panels that will Be 8 feet to 11.5 feet off the Ground. Production Capacity will be 7.5 MW of Alternating Current. Sol Orchard, Applicant

Steve Wragg of RBF Consulting presented the project changes from September. The project area will be 45.2 acres instead of 46.32 acres. The Capital Improvement Project of the realignment of Warnock is more accurately delineated in the new plan. There are 24 foot roads in the area. The facility will have 7 inverter pads, and it will be fenced and unmanned. The solar panels will be tilted and follow the sun. They will be 8 feet off the ground. Where the ground undulates, the solar panels will be 11.5 feet off the ground. A 10 foot cleared pathway has been added along the newly aligned Warnock/Ramona Street. The 100 year flood line has been added. There is a landscape plan with 2 types of landscaping. The first type will be a chain link fence with vines along the perimeter of the project. The second type will be native plants like toyon and coastal live oak that are bushes. The project will be 700 feet from Ramona Street and 300 feet from Warnock. The remainder of the property will be in agriculture as it is now. There will still be grazing by the road. The dry farming will be taken out. A non-toxic permeable binding agent will be sprayed on the soil to keep down the dust/dirt.

Mr. Hailey gave the South Subcommittee report. It was felt that the project preserves agricultural land more than building condos would. The Subcommittee wanted to see natural screening. Originally an 8 foot fence was proposed, but the County is now requiring a 6 foot fence. The Subcommittee said they would prefer an 8 foot fence. They would also like the screening with bushes to be close to the project. the project was approved by the South Subcommittee.

Ms. Anderson asked for the project to go to the Ramona Design Review Board (DRB) meeting on December 15 for screening and landscaping recommendations. The DRB doesn't want chain link fence. They look at signage and lighting. Before it is approved, the project should go to the DRB.

Larry Hofreiter, project manager at the County, said upper management determined the project did not have to go to the DRB.

Mr. Wragg said they meet the setbacks. There will be a directional sign for the Fire Department. There will be no lighting.

Ms. Anderson said that if there is lighting, the Dark Skies Policy is followed in this area, so any lighting should have downward shielding.

Mr. Tobiason said panels are more efficient now.

Ms. Mansolf said the project scoping letter says the project applicants need to mitigate for 41 acres of agricultural land because the facility will be installed on prime farmland, which is considered a resource. Will they be mitigating on site? What is the plan to meet the mitigation requirement? Ms. Mansolf also asked how far the road will be from the project, once it is realigned?

Mr. Wragg said they will probably be mitigating off site. The PACE program is a new program open to people with farmland. An agricultural easement will be purchased, possibly through the PACE program. Mr. Wragg said the project will meet the setbacks of 30 feet from the new road alignment, once built.

Mr. Brean asked where the mitigation would occur?

Chris Brown, project consultant, said farmers enter into the PACE Program voluntarily. If farmers in Ramona enter into the program, there will be some agriculture credits that could be purchased.

Mr. Brean said the project is well designed. He is concerned with the loss of agricultural land. He doesn't feel industrial is the intent for this area. He feels the project is hard to support.

Mr. Hickman asked about the pathway – will it be DG or a clear zone? A pathway is normally not just a clear zone.

Mr. Wragg said it would be a clear zone that would be moved with the alignment.

Mr. Sprong thought the project would tie into the transmission lines – now he is hearing it will be hooked into the distribution lines. Will wires be underground?

Will Pritchard, of Sol Orchard, said they have not decided yet where the wires will go to the road. They plan to put wires onsite underground. There some areas onsite where they would have to go through a drainage to put them underground, which they would prefer not to do due to environmental constraints.

Mr. Sprong said he would like to see the wires go underground. Also, the PACE Program is in its infancy. If the project proceeds, he would like to see ag lands secured in Ramona for mitigation.

Mr. Wallace asked what the opportunities for public comment will be?

Mr. Wragg said public notice went to all properties within 300 feet of the project for the Major Use Permit. When the studies are done, a mitigated negative declaration will be prepared which neighbors can comment on. Then the project will go to the Planning Commission. All neighbors within the 300 feet will be notified of the hearing and they can attend and speak.

Mr. Wallace said he feels the project is not in character with Ramona.

Mr. Brown said PACE helps people with agricultural land downzoned in the GP Update. Local farmers can be invited to provide mitigation locally. What matters is that the soil type is the same. Not all agricultural operations would qualify for mitigation for this land.

The Chair asked about the length of the lease for the land?

Mr. Pritchard said the lease is for 25 years. At the end of the 25 years, there could be a new lease, or the project could be rebuilt.

Ms. Anderson said this is a scenic area. She is concerned that vegetation on the chain link fence won't grow and the vines won't cover enough of the view of the facility. She would like to see better beautification.

Mr. Anderson said there is a push for renewable energy. He feels the property owner has the right to build the project on his land. It is his land and his project.

Speaker: Joe Minervini, Ramona Resident

Mr. Minervini said he did a google-search of solar farms. They are not attractive. He saw a news report where there were 168 solar panels on one home. Residents in the area say the glare was intense for 2.5 hours per day. He is concerned the facility will be visible from the road if 8 feet is the low part of the solar panels, and some will be 11.5 feet. Mr. Minervini would like the line of site represented – what people would be seeing driving down the road. Mr. Minervini referenced a memo he had written to Supervisor Jacob where he discusses SDG&E having signed contracts with Sol Orchard for providing power on several solar farms in San Diego County over a 25 year period. He asked for the Board of Supervisors to put these projects where they can't be seen.

Speaker: Ken Brennecke, Ramona Resident

Mr. Brennecke said they would be putting poly crystal on flat farm land. The project is out of character with the area, and would be building a power plant on agricultural land. Rehabilitating farmland is costly and hard to do. If removed in 25 years, the area may recover. The panels will poison the area. There is damage to the panels from wind and water. Fire could contaminate, too. The ambiance of the area will be reduced. Mr. Brennecke recommended 15 feet of fencing to screen the project.

Speaker: Patricia Brennecke, Ramona Resident

Ms. Brennecke said solar is good, but there are better alternatives. The knowledge for these types of facilities is consistently changing. What if Sol Orchard goes bankrupt? Will the land be safe for farming in the future? A solar farm is industry and not agriculture, and doesn't belong in a rural community.

Speaker: Donna Meyers, Ramona Resident

Ms. Meyers said this project is a misnomer. This is agricultural land and an industrial plant does not belong here. It is also in the 100 year flood plain. The project will disrupt the watershed. The project is for the sale of energy to SDG&E. The purpose is to preserve farmland. Why would people purchase agricultural land when it can be destroyed? The soil will be disturbed by the addition of the buildings. Ms. Meyers asked the RCPG to deny the project.

Speaker: Shelly Myers, Ramona Resident

Solar projects cultivate the sun. Agriculture cultivates the soil. Energy providers such as Sol Orchard have canvassed this agricultural area to find places to put solar plants. The agricultural land will be destroyed. There are other parcels in Ramona where the solar panels would not be visible where the land is also flat and there is a lot of sun. This is a good idea but a poor location. Ms. Myers is concerned the property will not return well to nature after 25 years. She felt it was too early to vote to support or deny the project. Other farmers approached in the area have said “no” to this type of project. She is saying “no,” also.

Speaker: Kathy DaSilva, Ramona Resident

Ms. DaSilva said she came from Harmony Grove to Ramona. The land in this area is not zoned for this type of industrial use. Projects such as this should go on the outskirts of town.

Speaker: Robin Joy Maxson, Ramona Resident

Ms. Maxson spoke against this project before. She said residential based solar projects are a better way to incorporate solar into the community. Small scale projects fit better into the community, while a project large enough to require a Major Use Permit would be harder to integrate into the community.

Speaker: Rick Morgal, Ramona Resident

Mr. Morgal is a photo voltaic supporter. SDG&E is an energy distribution company. SDG&E now wants to charge extra fees for people with photo voltaic systems. Systems on roofs of individual properties will make less of an impact in an area. We should have this first before land is torn up here and in the desert.

Speaker: Mark Hutton, Ramona Resident

Mr. Hutton said he agrees with the neighbors that the location for the proposed project is not a good location for the project. The project is light industrial in an agricultural area. He feels shade structures over the parking lot of K Mart would be a better way to integrate solar into the community. The net benefit will still be there, but the system won't be a tracking system. He feels putting solar systems on individual homes is also a good option.

Ms. Anderson felt the project should go to the Design Review Board.

Mr. Hofreiter said the County looked at the project and a determination was made that it was not subject to Design Review.

Mr. Hickman asked how the decision was made?

Mr. Hofreiter said upper management made that determination. A comment was made in the scoping letter that the project may be subject to Design Review and upper management said no.

The Chair said that we would then lose our opportunity to mitigate for the project's visual impacts.

Ms. Anderson said the project is not adhering to Ramona Design Guidelines. She would rather the project go to Design Review for suggestions on how to better incorporate the project into the area. Plants are looked at as well as size of signs and lighting. Information from Design Review would then be presented to the RCPG. We would be better able to make constructive suggestions for the

project. She has a problem with going around the Design Review Board. Design Review just wants the project to look good.

Mr. Brean said he never saw a scenic corridor treated like this. Maybe photo voltaic farms are not subject to Design Review.

Mr. Hickman said if they want the project to succeed, they should go to Design Board and make the effort to satisfy the concerns.

Mr. Stykel said modeling would go a long way to show what the project would look like when completed.

Mr. Anderson said the Meyers will be looking down on the project. He feels it is the property owner's decision to decide what he can do on his land. The County is going to support this project.

The Chair said it is best to mitigate the impacts in the community. He would like to see the project being sent to Design Review included in any motion made. This project would be tough to stop. A motion saying the project doesn't fit into the community would be thrown out.

MOTION: TO TABLE – UNTIL THEY (PROJECT APPLICANTS) MEET WITH THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD ON DECEMBER 15, 2011 – UNTIL THE JANUARY 5, 2012, RCPG MEETING.

Upon motion made by Chris Anderson and seconded by Kevin Wallace, the motion **passed 12-0-0-1-2**, with Richard Tomlinson stepping down, and Matt Deskovick and Scotty Ensign absent.

10-B: WEST (Mansolf) (No Business)

10-C: EAST (Ensign)(No Business)

10-D: PARKS (Tomlinson)(Action Item)

10-D-1:Development/Confirmation of the Park Land Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) Project Priority List and Recreation Programming Priority List(Identification of Recreation Program Needs and Priorities) For 2011-2012

Bill Saumier, County Parks, said a one-time fee is paid for by people building new homes to develop parks in the community. He would like the RCPG to make a long list of projects that they would like to see in the community. There may be an opportunity for a grant to be pursued. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can be done in certain areas of town that meet a qualifying criteria. The new soccer arena is in a CDBG area. The Ramona Community School playground just went to the Board of Supervisors for approval. The Pony Baseball Lighting project is going forward. The Ramona High School project is not going forward. The resurfacing of the tennis court in Collier Park is to be funded for \$50,000.

Mr. Sprong asked if there are any RICC projects on the list?

Mr. Tomlinson said the ROCC pavilion was on the list, but was removed last May by a vote. He asked that people contact him with their suggestions, by sending him at email at notcivil@cox.net

Mr. Stykel suggested a recreation center indoor basketball court and a community pool be included on the list.

Mr. Tomlinson said he intended to discuss and add to the Revitalization List a basketball court. Mr. Brean said there is a need for quality projects. He remembers there was an idea for a frisby/miniature golf course in the past on RMWD land, but then the idea disappeared.

Mr. Tobiason said a flood, in the past, washed out the baseball fields. He would like to see a cooperative effort between the entities with jurisdiction for this area to get rid of the clutter in the creek.

Mr. Saumier said that once a list is developed, projects would need to be prioritized. A maintenance entity is required for new elements.

10-E: GP Update Plan (Anderson)(No Business)

10-F: CUDA (Brean)(No Business)

10-G: Transportation/Trails (Sprong)(No Business)

10-H: DESIGN REVIEW (Chris Anderson) – Update on Projects Reviewed by the Design Review Board – *No Report*

10-I: Village Design Committee Meeting Report (Brean, Stykel)

Mr. Brean said the Committee met amongst themselves regarding some of the concepts Howard Blackson is proposing for the Town Center. They will be meeting with Mr. Blackson at their next meeting to give input on the plan for the Town Center.

ITEM 11: OTHER BUSINESS (Chair) (Possible Action)

A. Report on Stakeholder Meeting with US Forest Service on Cedar Creek Falls Trailhead (San Diego River Gorge Trail and Trailhead)

The Chair said the trail will not open again until Spring.

Mr. Hickman said the County will install the parking prohibition when the trail opens again.

B. Report on Emergency Evacuation Easement Status

The Chair said Supervisor Jacob's office is working with the RMWD on an MOU for the Emergency Evacuation Easement.

C. Hwy 67 Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report

Mr. Sprong gave the meeting report. The Highland Valley/Dye/Hwy 67 intersection is the most impacted intersection in the County. There is a plan for the intersection, but it is a conceptual plan. A Project Report was never completed for the intersection. The conceptual plan is inadequate. We should look for funding for the Project Report for the intersection. SANDAG is a possible source of funding. CalTrans doesn't have the money nor does the County. We can get support for funding for the intersection with letters from the Chamber and other groups and agencies. The project

Report is the first step for fact finding. There will be a meeting with Supervisor Jacob in the near future to discuss this.

Speaker: Mark Hutton, Ramona Resident

Mr. Hutton asked that the intersection be designed carefully so there won't be problems in the future with other nearby roads and intersections in the future. He brought up a number of past items and documents that had been tied in with the intersection, such as the CalTrans project Study Report which specifies a traffic signal at both Mussey Grade/Hwy 67 and Archie Moore/Hwy 67, and a grade separator that had been suggested for Mussey Grade/Hwy 67 to be done in conjunction with the South Bypass. Mr. Hutton is concerned that fixing one problem could lead to more problems along Hwy 67 and nearby roads and intersections.

MOTION: THE RCPG WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO SANDAG REQUESTING FUNDING FOR A PROJECT REPORT FOR THE HIGHLAND VALLEY/DYE/HWY 67 INTERSECTION.

Upon motion made by Dennis Sprong and seconded by Angus Tobiason, the motion **passed 13-0-0-0-2,**

D. Consideration of an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Research and Review the Loss of Agricultural Land In Ramona, and To Look for Possible Solutions

The Chair asked that this item be discussed at the next meeting, when Mr. Deskovick is present.

E. POD 10-007, Wind Energy Ordinance, Proposed Amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance for Wind Energy Systems Consisting of Clarifications, Deletions and Revisions. Includes Small Wind Turbines, which Will Be Allowed in the Future without an Administrative Permit if Adopted

The Wind Energy Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendment EIR document is out for public review until December 23, 2011. Ms. Mansolf reviewed portions of it, and 3, 80 feet independently mounted wind turbines can be put on properties of a 1-1/2 acre minimum lot size without an Administrative Permit in the future. Five roof mounted wind turbines are also allowed without an Administrative Permit. The roof mounted ones have to meet the height limit of the area, but the independent ones do not. They have to be setback their height or meet the minimum property line setbacks, whichever is greater. There is no restriction on where they can go and she has concerns with them being too close to parks that may attract birds and bats, and would like to see a restriction near areas of sensitive habitat.

Ms. Anderson said she would like to see the independently mounted wind turbines that exceed the height limit of an area require an Administrative Permit.

MOTION: TO SEND THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON INDEPENDENTLY MOUNTED SMALL WIND TURBINES: ON TOWERS WHERE THERE ARE PARKS, RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREAS OR OTHER OPEN SPACE AREAS, A BUFFER OR RELATED MECHANISM BE INCORPORATED TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO BIRDS AND BATS IN THOSE AREAS; AND, TO MAKE THE HEIGHT LIMIT OF SMALL WIND TURBINES CONSISTENT WITH THE HEIGHT LIMIT OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN, AND IF IT GOES OVER THE HEIGHT LIMIT, THEN COMMUNITY REVIEW BE REQUIRED.

Upon motion made by Kristi Mansolf and seconded by Chris Anderson, the motion **passed 13-0-0-0-2**, with Matt Deskovick and Scotty Ensign absent.

ITEM 12: ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (Chair)

A. Names Submitted for New Subcommittee Members (Action)

Ms. Anderson reminded subcommittee chairs it is time to request a letter of interest from subcommittee members that includes their current contact information.

B. Concerns of Members

C. Agenda Requests

ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Mansolf